

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 422

Approved by the Governor March 7, 2007

Introduced by Erdman, 47; Hansen, 42

FOR AN ACT relating to agriculture; to amend sections 54-191, 54-192, and 54-194, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions relating to membership of the Nebraska Brand Committee; to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections; and to declare an emergency.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 54-191, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

54-191 The Nebraska Brand Committee is hereby created. The Beginning August 28, 2007, the brand committee shall consist of the Secretary of State, who shall be chairperson, and four five members appointed by the Governor. Three At least three appointed members shall be active cattlemen and at least one appointed member shall be an active cattle feeder. The Secretary of State and the Director of Agriculture, or their designees, shall be nonvoting, ex officio members of the brand committee. The appointed members shall be owners of cattle within the brand inspection area, shall reside within the brand inspection area, shall be owners of Nebraska-recorded brands, and shall be persons whose principal business and occupation is the raising or feeding of cattle within the brand inspection area. The members of the brand committee shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among its appointed members during the first meeting held after September 1 each calendar year. A member may be reelected to serve as chairperson or vice-chairperson. The Secretary of State shall remain a member of the brand committee in the capacity as chairperson of the brand committee until a chairperson is elected as provided in this section. The terms of the members shall be four-year, staggered terms. At the expiration of the term of an appointed member, the Governor shall appoint a successor. The members of the brand committee serving on August 28, 2007, shall be considered appointed to serve the remainder of their terms. The Governor shall complete any additional appointment of members as necessary to fulfill the membership of the brand committee as prescribed by this legislative bill on or before August 28, 2007. Members serving on August 28, 1999, shall be considered appointed to serve the remainder of the term to which they were appointed. If there is a vacancy on the brand committee, the Governor shall fill such vacancy by appointing a member to serve during the unexpired term of the member whose office has become vacant. The action of a majority of the members shall be deemed the action of the brand committee. No appointed member shall hold any elective or appointive state or federal office while serving as a member of the brand committee. Each appointed member and each brand committee employee who collects or who is the custodian of any funds shall be bonded or insured as required under section 11-201. The appointed members of the brand committee shall be paid their actual and necessary traveling expenses in attending meetings of the brand committee or in performing any other duties that are prescribed in the Livestock Brand Act or section 54-415, as provided for in sections 81-1174 to 81-1177.

The purpose of the Nebraska Brand Committee is to protect Nebraska brand and livestock owners from the theft of livestock through established brand recording, brand inspection, and livestock theft investigation.

Sec. 2. Section 54-192, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

54-192 (1) The Nebraska Brand Committee shall employ such employees as may be necessary to properly carry out the Livestock Brand Act and section 54-415, fix the salaries of such employees, and make such expenditures as are necessary to properly carry out such act and section. Employees of the brand committee shall receive mileage computed at the rate provided in section 81-1176. The brand committee shall select and designate a location or locations where the brand committee shall keep and maintain an office and where records of the brand inspection and investigation proceedings, transactions, communications, brand registrations, and official acts shall be kept.

(2) The brand committee shall employ a director as the executive officer of the brand committee, and the director shall also be the chief brand inspector, the chief investigator, and, for administrative purposes, the brand committee head. The director shall keep a record of all proceedings, transactions, communications, and official acts of the brand committee, shall be custodian of all records of the brand committee, and shall perform such

other duties as may be required by the brand committee. The director shall call a meeting at the direction of the ~~Secretary of State~~ chairperson of the brand committee, or in his or her absence the vice-chairperson, or upon the written request of two or more members of the brand committee. The director shall have supervisory authority to direct and control all full-time and part-time employees of the brand committee. This authority allows the director to hire employees as are needed on an interim basis subject to approval or confirmation by the brand committee for regular employment. The director may place employees on probation and may discharge an employee. In the absence of the director, by reason of illness, vacation, or official business away from the ~~department's~~ committee's headquarters, the assistant director shall have similar authority as outlined in this section for the director.

(3) The brand committee shall employ a brand recorder who shall be responsible for the processing of all applications for new livestock brands, the transfer of ownership of existing livestock brands, the maintenance of accurate and permanent records relating to livestock brands, and such other duties as may be required by the brand committee.

(4) If any employee of the brand committee after having been disciplined, placed on probation, or having had his or her services terminated desires to have a hearing before the entire brand committee, such a hearing shall be granted as soon as is practicable and convenient for all persons concerned. The request for such a hearing shall be made in writing by the employee alleging the grievance and shall be directed to the director. After hearing all testimony surrounding the grievance of such employee, the brand committee, at its discretion, may approve, rescind, nullify, or amend all actions as previously taken by the director.

Sec. 3. Section 54-194, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

54-194 ~~As~~ The director of the Nebraska Brand Committee or the chairperson of the brand committee of the Nebraska Brand Committee, the ~~Secretary of State, or his or her designee,~~ shall have the authority to sign all certificates and other documents that may by law require certification by signature. Such documents shall include, but not be limited to, new brand certificates, brand transfer certificates, duplicate brand certificates, and brand renewal receipts. A facsimile of the brand committee seal and the signature of the brand recorder shall also be placed on all brand certificates.

Sec. 4. Original sections 54-191, 54-192, and 54-194, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.

Sec. 5. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when passed and approved according to law.